

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**PLANT CYTOPROTECTIVE GENES AND METHODS OF USING SAME**

The present invention provides a methods of increasing the resistance of a plant to biotic or abiotic stress by ectopically expressing in the plant a nucleic acid molecule encoding a plant anti-death (PAD) polypeptide or active fragment thereof. In a method of the invention, the encoded PAD polypeptide can have, for example, substantially the amino acid sequence of tomato PAD-1 (SEQ ID NO: 2) shown in Figure 1.